

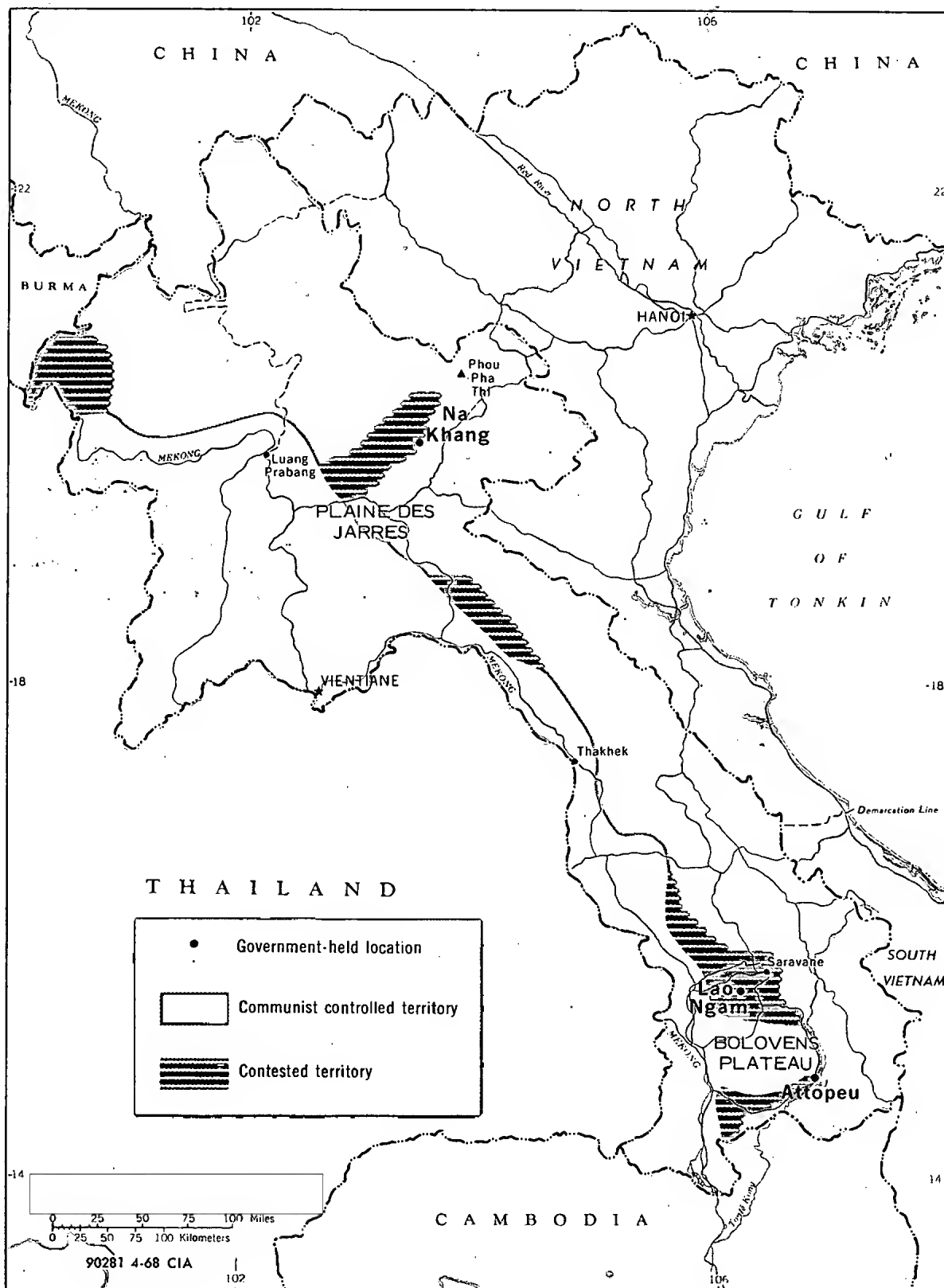


The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 13 April 1968



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LAOS

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LATE ITEM

West Germany

The wire services report serious clashes in six major West German cities and West Berlin early today between police and the followers of the leftist student leader shot in Berlin on Thursday. More violence is expected throughout the weekend.

DAILY BRIEF
13 APRIL 1968

1. South Vietnam

There are signs of increasing alarm in militantly anti-Communist Catholic circles at the prospect of US - North Vietnamese talks, which they fear may portend a Communist take-over. Several Catholic communities near Saigon are talking of protest demonstrations, but their leaders claim that no early action is planned. Other Catholic leaders are talking of reconstituting the Can Lao party, the political instrument of the Diem regime, which is anathema to the Buddhists.

2. Laos

Communist forces yesterday launched their first ground assault against government positions at Attapeu since late February. At last report, Attapeu was still in government hands. This may have been little more than a probe.

There is a great deal of speculation inside the government, however, that the Communists will celebrate the Laotian New Year--today through Monday--with an offensive in the Bolovens Plateau area. There have been signs that North Vietnamese troops are preparing for a new push at government positions on the eastern rim of the Bolovens and at the town of Lao Ngam.

The situation in northern Laos remains quiet.

3. Austria

Chancellor Klaus' visit to the US--and especially his meeting with the President--has been given unusually heavy and positive coverage by the Austrian press, TV, and radio.

4. West Berlin

Rioting, triggered by the shooting of the student leader Rudi Dutschke, took on an anti-American character yesterday. Crowds estimated at 6,000-10,000 clashed with police in the downtown area. "De-Americanization" of the radio station in the American sector (RIAS) was one of the more prominent "demands" of the demonstrators. The crowds also chanted slogans condemning US policy in Vietnam.

Dutschke's assailant is said to be a would-be Nazi. The police quote him as saying he was "influenced by the murder of Martin Luther King."

5. Nonproliferation Treaty

Sentiment for delay on the nonproliferation treaty is gaining at the UN. A majority of the Latin American delegations are said to favor postponing any UN action. The French-speaking African delegations are thinking along the same lines.

Continuation of this trend could imperil the treaty's chances at the General Assembly session resuming on the 24th.

6. France

Several American journalists in Paris--including representatives of the Washington Post and Time--have told the embassy that they have had word from the Quai and the Elysee Palace that Vietnam developments have opened the possibility for a breakthrough in US-French relations. These newsmen say they see a number of signs that the French Government is beginning to adjust its anti-American image, at least in the public domain. This adjustment, they believe, is likely to increase with the arrival of Ambassador Shriver.

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7. Chile

President Frei now has a rather good chance of getting Senate approval for a trip to the US. (The Senate vetoed such a visit in January 1967.) Frei has long hoped to make the trip; he has recently accepted an invitation to go to the Soviet Union.

8. Panama

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9. Pakistan

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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

- 1.) Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
- 2.) North Vietnamese Reflections of U S
Political Attitudes



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Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
for the President's Eyes Only

13 April 1968

I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

Pham Van Dong Interview: In an interview with a Japanese novelist on 4 April, the North Vietnamese premier said his country's 3 April statement "had successfully foiled the US attempt to gain propaganda advantage" in the peace talk dialogue. He also suggested that it might have prevented a US escalation of the war. This interview has not been published by Hanoi, but it has been run in several versions in the Japanese press.

The premier, according to his Japanese interviewer, was very outspoken on the issue of reciprocity. He said Hanoi stood pat on its conditions for talks and for a settlement, and that the US must abandon the San Antonio formula.

On a settlement of the war, he said Hanoi still insisted on withdrawal of US troops from the South and permanent and unconditional cessation of the war against the North. "We will not recognize any compromise of these points," Pham Van Dong is quoted as saying. There is no reference here to the role of the Liberation Front, but it could be an omission on the part of the Japanese interviewer rather than the North Vietnamese premier.

Most of the interview is a plausible expansion of known views. Until--and unless--Hanoi publishes its version, however, the interview probably should be taken in terms of the tone the premier was trying to convey rather than as a final position statement.

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North Vietnamese Hospital in Cambodia: [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] a rather extensive North Vietnamese hospital complex in Cambodia. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] the hospital was for casualties from Communist forces in the central highlands.

The complex consisted of a 3,000-bed hospital and four smaller hospitals. Two of these latter were mobile units operating with the troops. All five hospitals had surgical capability, but serious cases were sent from the mobile units back to the main hospital in Cambodia. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] one mobile unit received 173 casualties in three hours.

The main hospital was reasonably well equipped. It had an ear, eye, nose and throat department as well as X-ray and pharmaceutical sections. All drugs and equipment [REDACTED] come from North Vietnam.

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May Day Gifts: The Soviets have announced a ship will soon sail from Vladivostok for Haiphong with 10,000 May Day gift parcels.

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Repairs to Installations: Photography of 16 March showed extensive repair work on one of Haiphong's two power plants and the cement plant. No repair work had been done on either since they were hit in April 1967. [REDACTED]

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Hanoi on US Military Changes in Vietnam: Hanoi continues to disparage US leadership and to single out US military commanders for their alleged "failure" in Vietnam. In a 12 April broadcast to South Vietnam, Hanoi reported the recent changes in US commands in South Vietnam and in the Pacific area. It claimed that these decisions resulted from a series of high-level Washington conferences following the "discharge of Westmoreland" and pointed out that they will not improve the "ever worsening" US position in Vietnam.

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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

There is nothing of significance to report.

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